

REMARKS

Claims 6-15 are pending in the application. Claims 6-10 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b), as described in paragraph 2 of the Office Action. Claims 6, 8, 10, 11, 13 and 15 are the only independent claims.

Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection of claims 6-10 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b), for the following reasons.

Vignotto has a patent date of February 20, 2001 and a filing date of October 29, 1999. However, the present application enjoys a benefit of priority under 35 U.S.C. § 120 to Patent No. 6, 174,117, having a filing date of April 6, 1999. Accordingly, Vignotto is not applicable prior art under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b).

In view of the above remarks, Applicants respectfully submit that claims 6-10 are not anticipated by Vignotto, and urge that the rejection of claims 6-10 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b), be withdrawn.

Furthermore, attached hereto is an English translation of the priority document accompanied with a statement verifying the accuracy of the translation.

Having fully and completely responded to the Office Action, Applicants submit that all of the claims are now in condition for allowance, an indication of which is respectfully solicited.

If there are any outstanding issues that might be resolved by an interview or an Examiner's amendment, the Examiner is requested to call Applicants' attorney at the telephone number shown below.

Respectfully submitted,

Teruyuki KAWATANI et al.

By: 

Thomas D. Robbins
Registration No. 43,369
Attorney for Applicants

TDR/jlg
Washington, D.C. 20006-1021
Telephone (202) 721-8200
Facsimile (202) 721-8250
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